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Nicaraguan says missile sites being built

Associated Press

The Sandinista armed forces are constructing two sites for Soviet surface-to-air missiles, Miguel Bolanos Hunter, an official of Nicaraguan state security who defected last month, charged yesterday. He also said the Sandinista allegation of a U.S.-sponsored plot to murder Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto was a fabrication aimed at discrediting the democratic opposition in Nicaragua.

At a news conference at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, Bolanos said the Nicaraguan army has constructed two underground bases for four Soviet-made surface-to-air missiles.

He said one site, at Nicaragua's international airport in Managua, already is completed, and the other, located some 12 miles from the capital, will be ready in about two months.

Bolanos did not say whether the missiles themselves have been deployed.

American officials said they could not substantiate Bolanos' information but added the possibility of such activity has been discussed in Washington.

Bolanos based his claim on information given him by a friend who he said has worked as an engineer at the sites and confirmed the account from a cousin. Bolanos said he did not personally see the alleged missile sites.

At the interview, the defector wore dark glasses to conceal his identity. He

spoke in English but occasionally needed an interpreter to assist him. Bolanos discussed his role as a security agent in Nicaragua and his growing disillusionment with what he described as the totalitarian course of the revolution.

The son of an American mother and a Nicaraguan doctor, Bolanos fled Nicaragua by hijacking an airplane to Costa Rica early last month. He came to the United States shortly thereafter and has passed on his information to American officials.



Nicaraguan defector Miguel Bolanos Hunter talks with reporters here yesterday. AP

Bolanos said he hopes to return to Central America soon to join the battle against the Sandinista government.

The defector also elaborated on his report that Soviet-made MiG fighter planes are being held in Cuba and are scheduled to be delivered after the planned 1985 elections.

The Reagan administration has cited several runway lengthening projects in Nicaragua as evidence that the Sandinistas plan to acquire MiG jets, and has claimed that Nicaraguans are being trained as pilots in Bulgaria.

U.S. officials believe the planes are the MiG-21 model, a multi-role fighter first flown in 1955 and considerably developed since then.

To ensure victory in the 1985 elections, Bolanos said the Sandinistas have embarked on a plan to "neutralize" opposition political parties, independent labor unions and the church.